

AN OLD DISCIPLE.

A
S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY THE

D E A T H

OF THE LATE

Mr. JOHN MUDGE,

Who departed this Life, JANUARY 6, 1779.
in the 70th Year of his Age.

By N. HILL.

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S E R M O N.

SALADIN, an eastern Emperor, when his end drew near, commanded an herald to go into his camp, and to wave his winding sheet at the end of his lance in the view of his whole victorious army: which he did with these words; *See here all that the great Saladin, the Emperor and Lord of the East, hath gained by all his victories and triumphs.*

I am called, by the removal of an excellent member, and very active and useful Deacon, of this church, to hold up this day, in your view, the ensign of death.

Though the wisdom of the wise; the devotion of the most devout; and the piety of the most pious amongst mankind, are no shelter from the darts of death—though all the past generations of men with the exception only of two, Enoch and Elijah, are in the silent dust, it is a fact that multitudes pass on as securely as though they were never to die. Some of the people of God

themselves have been surprized when death came; and have had a very painful feeling that something had been left undone which they always intended to perform.

Who in this place can expect an exemption from death? What we have before us is the grave; and a few steps more will bring us to it. The dark vale of death is a vale we must pass through: and believe me, my friends, that of all important things, the most important is preparation for the passage. What is that which multitudes prize and pursue when compared with this? Whatever I possess, I have nothing; whatever I am doing, I am doing nothing, if I cannot die with a gospel hope. Of what avail is the world's peace if there is no peace between God and my soul? Had I the smiles and applause of a world—were I the largest possessor of every thing the world calls good or great—what would it profit me if I had nothing to support my heart in the last conflict of nature—nothing that will survive this material system—nothing that will clothe my soul in the upper world, or gain me admission into it? When the great Emmanuel left heaven—lived upon earth—bled and died upon the cross—that we might be made alive unto God, die in peace, and be blest hereafter; he gave us to understand, in a very striking manner, that these are the most momentous concerns that can lie upon the human heart.

These were momentous concerns in the esteem of our departed friend, on whose much lamented death I shall address you from a very few words, to which, in his private papers, he often alludes. You will find them,

—AN OLD DISCIPLE—

A title of distinguished honour. What is that which Nobles, Princes, and Potentates wear, when compared with it? What can adorn youth, or dignify age, like a discipleship to Christ? What is the honour of a place on the roll of fame amidst Philosophers, Heroes, Statesmen, Kings, in comparison with his who is styled in my text *an old Disciple*?

The person is Mnason, a native of Cyprus, but an inhabitant of Jerusalem, who had probably been converted either by Christ himself, or by some of the Apostles on the first opening of their commission. It may not be amiss just to remark, that there is a wrong translation in the verse from whence my text is taken. "There went with us also certain of the disciples of Cesarea," and it is added, "and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, with whom we should lodge." The last clause should be rendered, "brought us to one Mnason of Cyprus, with whom we should lodge."

This visit was an honour done him as an old disciple—as a person of long experience in the ways of Christ—as a person who had remained firm amidst trials and persecutions—and who had gained an established reputation in the church. He was ready to employ all the remaining vigour of nature, whether more or less, in the service of Christ; and in every office of cordial love, and generous friendship to all whose hearts were in the Saviour's work.

We

We have in Minason, in the
First place, a Disciple.

That is, a sincere christian—a true believer in the glorious founder of christianity—and whose guide in every article of faith and practice, was the gospel of Christ. He was brought (as every real disciple must be) to a firm belief in the divine mission of Christ—that he was the promised, and long expected, Messiah—that he was the mighty power and wisdom of God—that God spake in him and by him—and that it is to him the ends of the earth must look for deliverance from that mental darkness in which they were involved; from that guilt into which they were sunk; and from that eternal death to which they were exposed. A real disciple's persuasion of the truth of these things respecting Jesus is not a cold assent of the understanding, as to some proposition in which he hath scarce any concern: but a steady, heart-felt, conviction of the justice of every claim he makes on the attention, credit, and souls of men. His faith is founded on a train of divine dispensations—on the exact fulfilment of ancient prophecy in the person and characters of Christ—on the miracles that attended his birth and death—on the amazing works he wrought—on the manner of his life—on the important nature and divine tendency of his doctrines—on the unshaken firmness of the Apostles in his cause, whom they must have known to be an impostor if he really was such—on the surprising spread of the gospel, notwithstanding the powers of the world and of darkness were in league against it—on the testimony of the enemies of Christ—and on the great and glorious change christianity hath wrought in the hearts and lives of multitudes in this fallen world. Hence he infers the infidel's
fatal

fatal mistake, and that the very reason he boasts is against him.

Where there is a real discipleship to Christ, such as Mnaſon's was, the nature and design of his undertaking are understood and felt. Who will make a personal application to Christ who hath no conviction that the end God had in view was the restoration of our unhappy race to that image of himself they had lost; and to that bliss from which they had fallen, and from which they might have been forever excluded?

There is no discipleship to Christ without a conviction of the end for which he came, and the need which the soul stands in of such a Saviour as he is. Christianity is the religion of sinners—for them it was designed—for their recovery and salvation it was calculated—and the gospel scheme will never be really welcome to a soul which hath no conviction of the being, malignity, and danger of sin. I am no disciple of Christ whom I preach, if I do not see sin in that affecting and awful light the gospel casts upon it—if my own sins have not lain as a burden upon my heart—and if mine inmost soul hath not been deeply touched with the view of that condemnation which is sin's desert. He who sees himself, the law he hath broke, and the God he hath offended, in a just light, will see his want of a Mediator to render his access to a just and holy God safe and comfortable; and he will hear no sound with half the pleasure he hears that which brings salvation.

A disciple of Christ conceives of deliverance from the condemning and reigning power of sin, as an object of the utmost importance. Could you see his heart, you would find this the object of his first and warmest wish. To be delivered
from

from the effects of Jehovah's displeasure, and to have that guilt removed which hath debased his nature, is an object he cannot lose sight of. "As the heart panteth after the water brooks," so pants his soul for this; and he hath no expectation of safety and happiness until this is secured.

The real disciple hath a lively conviction that Christ "is made, of God, unto fallen men, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption"—that he can effect his deliverance from that guilt which lies with weight upon his heart—that he can justify him before God—and that he, by his gospel and grace, can make him wise and good, and form him for the heavenly world. This conviction allays the anguish of his heart, and casts him, as an humble suppliant, at the Father's feet.

The real disciple of Christ makes the most fervent application of soul to him—to his blood to wash away his guilt—to his grace to renew and sanctify him in body, soul, and spirit—and through him he seeks for justification and life. He who is brought by the preaching of his word, and the agency of the Spirit, to a deep and commanding concern about his soul, and to the diligent use of the means of deliverance and salvation Christ hath prescribed—he that is renewed in the spirit of his mind—that takes the complection not only of his sentiments, but also of his temper and conduct, from the gospel and the Saviour's example—he that does an honour to God, to the Redeemer, and his religion, in those stations he fills—is a disciple. If, my Friends, your ears and hearts are open to receive

* 1 Cor. i. 30.

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the Saviour's words—if his wisdom guides you—if his power and grace defend you----if you breathe his spirit—if he dwells in your hearts by faith---and if a certain sacred communion and fellowship subsists between him and you; then yours is that desirable and happy state of discipleship to Christ which I am now describing. Let none think that this is a trifling matter. It is essential to the very being of a disciple, that he fall in with that part of the gospel scheme which hath respect to holiness in heart and life. It is his ardent wish and fervent prayer, that his faith may be a living faith—an active principle—and that every rebellious power and passion may be brought into subjection to Christ. He does not ask a dispensation to sin, nor does he desire a salvation of which holiness makes not an essential part. For this he daily petitions the throne of grace, that his affections may be spiritualized—that the purest precepts of the gospel may be reduced to practice by him—that he may follow Christ fully—that he may exemplify every christian grace—and be numbered with that peculiar people who are zealous of good works. If I feel not a warm desire to recommend myself to God, through Christ, in every station in which I am placed—if God's special love and favour are not of unspeakably greater importance to me, in my own esteem, than the smiles of the world, or any object imagination can paint—if the bent and tendency of my soul is not towards God—if there be not a principle of love to God within me that prompts me to obedience, and makes obedience sweet—if I walk not with God—and if I breathe not after that world where I shall see and enjoy him; I am not a disciple. A genuine disciple's language is this——“I would be every

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“ thing

“ thing thou wouldest have me to be ; and do
 “ every thing thou wouldest have me to do. I
 “ have not a power but thou mayest command ;
 “ nor an affection which I would not have fixed
 “ where thou dost direct. What is an eternity
 “ employed for thee, when compared with that
 “ salvation which I hope to possess ? I would
 “ feel the constraining influence of thy love to
 “ bind me to the service of my God, and to the
 “ performance of every duty I am bound to dis-
 “ charge. I would hate every false way—I would
 “ esteem all thy precepts concerning all things
 “ to be right—and wish to bear, at all times,
 “ about me, growing marks of my discipleship
 “ to thee. With pleasure would I follow whither
 “ thy spirit leads—and may thy counsel be my
 “ guide, thine arm my guard, thine heaven my
 “ home. With the same ardour with which I
 “ wish thy glory hereafter, may I wish and pur-
 “ sue a conformity to thine image and likeness
 “ upon earth. Teach me to say with the
 “ Apostle, the life which I live in the flesh is
 “ by the faith of the son of God ; and when my
 “ pilgrimage shall be over, may I expire in the
 “ exercise of a living faith, and find in thy con-
 “ verse and embrace that substantial, permanent,
 “ and eternal felicity which earth denies.”

This is the disciple of Christ. Such was
 Mnason. Such was our departed friend : and I
 would hope and believe, that I have drawn the
 picture of many I this day address.

We have, in Mnason, not only a disciple ; but
 in the

SECOND place, an old Disciple.

By

By this it is most natural to understand that he was no new convert—that his conversion was a thing of ancient date—that he had proved Christ and his ways—and that he saw growing reason to adhere to both, even until death. What his age was, we know not: but my text leads me to conceive of him, not only aged as a man, but aged as a disciple. Though we cannot be certain when it was that he was converted to christianity, it seems highly probable that it was on the first preaching of the gospel at Jerusalem. This supposition will place the commencement of his discipleship in the early part of his life; for when this visit was paid to Mnason, about 40 years had passed since our Lord opened his commission.

By far the greater part of mankind are brought to their graves in the early periods of life. We read of an Abel, an Abijah, a Josiah, examples of early grace and piety, who were soon cut down.

“ They sparkl’d—were exhal’d—then went to heaven.”

One of the shortest reigns of all the British Princes was the reign of the most promising Prince. So few charms hath this world, that it is no mark of God’s displeasure with his children that he takes them early from it. What is the world they leave, when compared with that to which their heavenly Father takes them?

Some, we have seen, soon ripened for heaven, and soon taken to it. How many plants of grace; laden with goodly fruit; the delight of every eye; the joy of every heart; the hope of future years; have been taken from the earth at thirty—twenty—nay, earlier still!

Happy for the world that some have stood the shock of many a blast; weathered out many a storm; and seen the longest date of human life!

Some we have known who were early brought to God; and who have exemplified through many rolling years, the graces of that Spirit who created them anew. In some of the eminent among the servants of Jehovah, and in Job in particular, that declaration was fulfilled, "thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season.*" In maturest life—mature in every grace and virtue—ripe for glory; their heavenly Father took them. However pleasing it might have been to Christ's first disciples to have ascended when their Lord ascended—however great their felicity would have been on their entrance into those mansions of which their divine Master spake—it was his pleasure that they should, for a time, abide upon earth. Much as he loved them—numerous and formidable as those enemies were which, he knew, they would be called to encounter—and though he himself says in that incomparable prayer, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me†"—yet it was his will that their bliss should be deferred. And it may deserve notice here, that John, though the favourite disciple of Jesus, was taken to glory the last of all the Apostles.

Although the world in which we are is so full of death, there have been those among our pious friends whom God hath kept (their lives, by his providential care—their faith and graces, by his word and spirit) to a period verging on the fullest age of man. Notwithstanding their friend and Saviour knows that there is nothing upon earth

* Job v. 26.

† John xvii. 24.

to satisfy those enlarged and divine desires he gives them; that it is a tempting, deluding, dangerous world in which they are; that their faith and patience will be often tried; that Satan will employ his most malignant arts; that they will be wounded in some tender part: notwithstanding he knows this, and knows also that they are ripe for glory; and that their hopes are full of immortality; yet their harvest, the consummation of their bliss, is delayed.

But, remember that the great Head of the church is not only "wonderful in working," but "excellent in counsel: not only "mighty in strength," but "wise in heart;" and that he hath many wise and gracious ends to answer by prolonging the stay of some of his people upon earth. This leads me in the

THIRD place, to point out some reasons why, amidst the waste of time and death, God leaves, in his churches, here and there an old Disciple.

The great Head of the church may have in view the good of the world, and of the respective churches, in which he prolongs their stay—his own glory, which they reflect—and the improving their own graces, and the enhancing their future felicity.

God may, amidst the waste of time and death, leave here and there an old Disciple, in the

1. That the best interest of their respective churches, and the good of the world at large, may be promoted by them.

They are instruments in the Redeemer's hand of carrying on his important and glorious cause in this fallen part of the creation of God. By them God is speaking—by them old and young, sinners

sinners and saints, may profit—and in their temper and spirit, conduct and converse, Christ and his ways appear amiable and glorious. They are, if I may be allowed the expression, pillars of fire to the rest of mankind for their light and guidance. An old Disciple, who in early life was brought to Christ—who hath been long attentive to his instructions, subject to his discipline, habituated to the practice of his will, and established in grace and piety, is a living gospel—is “an epistle of Christ, written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart, known and read of all men.” The life of an old Disciple is a standing demonstration that religion is something more than speculation—that it communicates a dignity which nothing upon earth can equal—that its tendency is to happiness, and that its effects are permanent and noble. A conversation becoming the gospel of Christ tends much to promote the spread of genuine christianity in the world. What is every sermon we preach when compared with the life of an old Disciple—a life spent, through grace, under the influence of gospel principles? It awakens and commands attention—all may understand it—it is addressed to the heart. As those stars which have the brightest appearance in the heavens shine in borrowed lustre—as the moon, though dark in itself, by reflecting the rays of the sun, becomes a grand and beautiful object, and makes a second day: so an old Disciple, by the reception and improvement of that light and glory which God hath caused to rise upon this dark world, becomes possessed of a de-

gree of lustre and excellence which none besides can boast—and by reflecting the beams of the “Sun of righteousness” which are descending upon him, he diffuses light and happiness in the sphere in which he moves. They of whom the Apostle speaks, “who are light in the Lord,”^{*} have a certain glory far exceeding every thing we behold in the natural world, and stand first amongst the inhabitants of every country in which they are found. That temper and disposition which God hath wrought in them by his word and spirit, render them objects of esteem and love: and where their conduct in the several relations of life is attended to, a certain propriety, beauty, and dignity will appear. By them we are led to form high and exalted apprehensions of the nature, government, ways and works of God—of the glorious dispensation of the gospel—and of that divine person by whom it came, and to whom they are indebted for all they are, and for all they have. What are abstract ideas of the nature of virtue and piety—of their loveliness and necessity—of their power and influence on the life and conversation—and of the connection there is between them and true, solid, lasting peace and satisfaction; when compared with what we gain by an attention to some distinguished disciple of Christ of long standing in the church? The religion of Jesus never appears to so great an advantage as when brought into life; nor is so likely to impress the heart, and improve the morals of men. No description we can give of the graces of the believer can represent them in a manner so engaging and attractive as when they appear in his daily walk. The man who, through

* Eph. v. 8.

grace, is actuated by the principles and motives of the gospel, and maintains an unshaken regard to the authority and government of God in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness; is a great public blessing. The sum of piety and happiness in the world is increased by him. Oh! if those whom Providence hath placed in important stations of life, gave proof that they had been with Jesus—spoke always that language he teaches—breathed always that spirit which it is the design of the gospel to infuse—and exhibited the graces of the christian in every pleasing point of light; what might we not expect! How kind, then, in the great Head of the church to leave, amidst the waste of time and death, here and there, an old Disciple!

God may, on account of the ungodly and unbelieving world, leave, in his churches, here and there an old Disciple. He who is a stranger to Jesus, and to that new birth of which the gospel speaks, may see, in an old Disciple, what *he* wants. His life and converse, so consistent and amiable, so ornamental to himself, and beneficial to others, have a tendency to engage and fix the sinner's attention, and to touch his heart. How can any forbear to see, in an old Disciple, that "the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour"*—that the religion of Jesus is not a cunningly devised fable—that nothing can adorn and dignify the soul of man like the graces of the spirit—and that there is nothing so happy in its consequences as a covenant relation to God? O, sinner! hasten to some old Disciple of Jesus, and learn of him that thy wisdom is folly—thy pleasures, pain—thine honour, disgrace—

* Prov. xii. 26.

thy life, death, when compared with his. See in him something thou dost not possess, which lightens every burden—mitigates every sorrow—administers sweet consolation under every trouble—converts darkness into day—changes this wilderness into Eden—and which tends to transform this fallen world into a resemblance of heaven itself. See some pious aged traveller, bending towards the grave as he goes. Affliction stops him. He smiles upon thee. What creates that smile? That persuasion of his personal interest in the everlasting love of God, through Jesus, to which thou canst make no pretension. Why is not this old Disciple more dismayed when he stands on the brink of death—when he looks forward into eternity? That God, whom thou canst not stile thy God, is a God to him. O thou! who hast not taken one step in that path in which this old Disciple walked; how wouldest thou feel in such a situation as this? Thy knees would smite one against the other—thou wouldest quake in every joint, tremble in every nerve, and agonizing fear would drink up thy spirit. Oh! may this sight, through grace, write deep conviction upon thy soul that thou art wrong—fatally wrong—in thy neglect of Christ, and the vast concerns of thine immortal soul. Perhaps thou art the son of some pious parent, whose stay upon this earth the great Head of the church may have prolonged, that he may be the means of convincing thee that thou art void of ornament if thou hast not the graces of the Spirit—that thou art naked if Christ clothe thee not—that thou wouldest be poor and wretched, though the owner of a world, if he who made both it and thee was not thy friend—and that, without his love in Christ Jesus, existence is a thing to be deplored.

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Oh!

Oh! that the loss thy pious parent may, for the present, sustain in having his bliss deferred, may prove eternal gain to thee!

God may, amidst the waste of time and death, leave, here and there, an old Disciple, that he may afford sinners a standing proof that redemption is a great work—a work in which all the perfections of God harmonize and shine—a work of the greatest importance to this fallen world. In them they may see what a glorious change the word and power of God can effect. I may tell the awakened sinner—the man who begins to feel some concern for his soul, for the pardon of his sins, and the justification of his person; that every humble disciple of Jesus he knows, whether young or old, is a convincing proof that he hath to do with a merciful God; and that in faith and repentance his load of guilt will be removed. If the man be here on whose heart sin lies as an heavy burden: he is encouraged by the sight and converse of those who have found mercy, to make application to God, through Christ, as they were enabled to do. If the language of any soul before me is, “I would be a disciple of Jesus, but “I cannot. There is so much to be done that “it will never be accomplished. My corrupt “passions are so strong, that they will never be “subdued; and my soul is so polluted, it will “never be cleansed. I am so far from salvation, “that mine will never be wrought. Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from “the body of this death?—But it is my burden, “and I must bear it.” Now, every disciple of Jesus is a proof that thine is not a lost case; and the experience of many of them proves that it is, by no means, a singular one. He who hath said, “work out your own salvation with fear and
“trembling,”

“trembling,” hath also added, “for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.”* What the power and grace of God have done for every disciple thou knowest, that will they do for thee on thy believing, persevering, application to him. What thou mayest now almost despair of will, when God works, be accomplished, for it hath been accomplished in every disciple now upon earth, in an host which no man can number in the upper world, and the promise is made to us. However obdurate their hearts might once be, they were softened—however stubborn their wills, they were bowed to the obedience of that Prince to whose unrivalled excellence, power, and compassion, they had been strangers—their corrupt natures were transformed—their affections spiritualized—they were created anew in Christ Jesus—and raised above the rest of the human race. In them we see that God can enlighten the darkness of the heart—increase our faith—inflame our love—direct and invigorate every power—purify our souls—exalt our hopes—and shed abroad satisfaction and comfort in the soul. An old Disciple is a demonstration that great attainments in faith and piety may be made—that the gospel may be wrought into the heart, and brought forth into life—and that his is a mean and ignoble spirit, who either despairs of becoming a disciple of Jesus, or can rest in some low attainments he hath been enabled to make.

God may leave, in his churches, here and there an old Disciple, that they may be instru-

* Phil. ii. 12.

mental in instructing, improving, encouraging, and comforting the pious. The young convert needs the example, counsel, reproof, and prayers of the more experienced than himself in that way on which he hath just entered. An aged and venerable saint, who was brought early to God—who hath proved the ways of Christ—and whose life is an avowal that he serves the best of Masters, that a steady consistent walk with Jesus is what it is no less his interest and honour than it is his duty to maintain, and that the Redeemer's cause, notwithstanding that opposition which is made to it by some, and the contempt in which it is held by others, is the noblest in which the human soul can engage; is a sight that evidently tends to confirm the wavering—to encourage the timid—and to establish the hearts of those who are piously inclined in his own family, in the church to which he belongs, and in the place where he dwells. What sight upon earth more pleasing, instructive, and encouraging, than a Disciple of Jesus grown old, silvered with age, in the service of his God—calm and easy in himself—full of gratitude to him who made him what he is—ready to speak and act for the glory of God, the Redeemer's honour, and the good of others, whilst a capacity for either is continued—rejoicing in every addition that is made to the church of Christ, in every event that bodes well for that cause that lies near to, and warms, his aged heart—and who, under the weight of years and increasing infirmities, is patient and resigned, and looks forward with hope, and at seasons with triumph, to that blest world where he shall see the King in his glory; be numbered with them who “have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,”
and

and join the song, " blessing and honour, and
 " glory and power, be unto him who sits upon
 " the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and
 " ever." * What charms hath a philosophical
 life when compared with that which some old
 Disciple leads! What is a philosophical death
 when compared with that he dies!

The pious in past ages sought the converse and
 counsel of each other, and God blest it for their
 mutual good. It is the declaration of the wisest
 of men, that " the mouth of a righteous man is
 " a well of life" †—that " the lips of the righ-
 " teous feed many." ‡ " When those who feared
 the Lord spake often one to another"—when se-
 rious and pious converse was maintained between
 the members of the same church, the children of
 the same Father, and the travellers to the same
 world—when one Christian would unbosom his
 heart to another, and freely relate God's dealings
 with him, his experience in the ways of Christ;
 painful doubts were often resolved—clouds and
 darkness were often scattered—pious principles
 were strengthened—impressions which divine
 truth had made became more deep—divine
 things took faster hold on the soul—zeal for
 God and Christ was increased—the flame of di-
 vine love and charity burnt brighter in the souls
 of Disciples—the fearful in heart became
 courageous—and those who were on the side of
 the Lord God of Israel were drawn closer to-
 gether, and felt an interest in the safety and hap-
 piness of each other. He knew the value of that
 pious, experimental conversation which hath but
 few advocates in these times, whose language is
 this: " O my soul! thou hast said unto the Lord,

* Rev. v. 13.

† Prov. x. 11.

‡ Prov. x. 21.

" thou

“ thou art my Lord : my goodness extendeth
 “ not to thee, but to the saints that are in the
 “ earth, and the excellent, in whom is all my de-
 “ light.”* “ Let the righteous smite me, it shall
 “ be a kindness ; let him reprove me, it shall
 “ be an excellent oil that shall not break mine
 “ head.”† “ We took sweet counsel together, and
 “ walked unto the house of God in company.”‡
 Serious and pious conversation stands recom-
 mended, not only by the example of the wisest
 and best of men, and its beneficial influence in
 families, in churches, and the world ; but by the
 approbation of the Supreme : for it is said,
 “ they that feared the Lord spake often one to
 “ another ; and the Lord hearkened and heard,
 “ and a book of remembrance was written for
 “ them that feared the Lord, and thought upon
 “ his name. And they shall be mine, saith the
 “ Lord of hosts, when I make up my jewels.” §
 The man whom Christ had dispossessed of the
 Devil prayed, “ that he might be with him,
 “ Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but said un-
 “ to him, go home to thy friends, and tell them
 “ how great things the Lord hath done for thee,
 “ and hath had compassion on thee.” || Un-
 fashionable as this is become, I doubt not much
 good is yet done by what remains of serious, pi-
 ous conversation among christians—that it is the
 means of encouraging each others hearts, and of
 strengthening each others hands—and that by it,
 as one instrument, Christ is carrying on his glo-
 rious cause in this fallen world. The old Dis-
 ciples whom God hath left among us, who re-
 member how their fathers conversed, and who

* Ps. xvi. 2, 3.

† Ps. cxli. 5.

‡ Ps. lv. 14.

§ Mal. iii. 16. 17.

|| Mark v. 19.

are greatly indebted, under God, to the wise and pious conversation of others; see and lament it as one of the alarming sins of the times, that the most important concerns the human heart can know, are so much banished from our social hours—that so little knowledge can be taken, even of many believers, that they have been with Jesus, that they are related to him, that they have any expectations from him, or know any thing about him. But when to omit what is so important, so scriptural, and hath so pleasing an aspect on the interest of vital, experimental religion, be fashionable, let us, my friends nobly dare to be singular. When religion is banished conversation, it is a sad sign that it either is, or soon will be, banished from the heart. If we glory in the name of Christians—if we entertain high sentiments of our religion and its adorable Founder—let us not be ashamed nor backward to acknowledge it before men. “Let us witness a good confession”—let our speech and our lives echo the wise and gracious design, doctrines, precepts, privileges of the gospel—let us be steady in that course which conscience, gratitude, and scripture recommend, and in the practice of those things which will be the means of improving the divine life in our own souls, which have often been instrumental in improving it in others, which God approves, and which redound to the glory of the great Saviour of men. I know it is possible for the cause of religion to be hurt by the man who means to serve it. But where *prudence* is joined with *piety*, there is no danger of this. Let us not contribute our part to render that still more unfashionable which private and public utility recommend, which the great God may expect, and on which Heaven smiles.

smiles. What we shall wish to have done, when dying, or when dead, that let us, in divine strength, resolve to perform whether it be the fashion of the times or not. If the world will not save us, let us not endanger the salvation of our souls in order to please the world.

I have said the more on this subject of religious conversation, and the instrumentality of an old Disciple in improving, establishing, and comforting others by it, not from my own convictions alone of its great importance, and the very unfavourable aspect which the growing neglect of it, in this age, wears on the interest of real, vital godliness; but because I find in the Diary of our departed friend, which was begun 1739, very frequent mention made of the great light, instruction, improvement, and consolation he received from pious converse. It appears from his papers, that for the space of several years he employed some part of two evenings almost every week this way. On the 4th of February, 1740, a Fast day, he writes thus. " Attended on public worship at Dr. Watts' meeting, in company with two of my dear Friends. My heart was much affected, and carried forth towards God in every part of the sacred transaction. The whole assembly seemed to be sensibly touched with awful apprehensions of the power, and of the wrath of God, whilst Christ's servants in the ministry were sweetly leading us to Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. At the close of the day went to the house of a good *old Disciple*, which was no small comfort to me, with whom we spent some time in serious conversation, in reading, in hearing what God the Lord would say unto us, and in pouring out our souls before

“ fore him. * I hope the blessed effects of this
 “ day will be seen and felt by the nation in ge-
 “ neral, to the greater reformation of it, and
 “ to the comfort of all God’s children. Amen
 “ and Amen.”

D

God

* “ February 24. How great is the blessing of christian
 “ friendship! We were mutually edified in the ways of God,
 “ and made to discern a greater beauty in holiness.

“ Tuesday. Been this evening where I would willingly
 “ have been absent, though among professing christians.
 “ Lord, make me a *christian indeed* that I may *adorn* my
 “ profession.

“ Tuesday. “ Met my dear Friends this evening—talk-
 “ ed on spiritual affairs, and found my heart much com-
 “ forted; but did not gain, as I expected. Lord, make us
 “ to improve in the divine life, lest we lose the things that
 “ we have wrought, and another take our crown.

“ Tuesday. Met my friends this evening, and discoursed
 “ concerning the experience we have of the divine life, our
 “ growth in grace, and sacred knowledge. I trust, I was
 “ much the better for their profitable instruction. Lord,
 “ make us wiser and better, that we may know how to
 “ speak words in season to each other; and do thou build
 “ us up in our most holy faith.

“ Tuesday. Spent a few hours with my dear Friends on
 “ the nature of prayer, and its various parts. Lord, in-
 “ struct us more and more in this important duty, and may
 “ we find our souls get nearer to thee every time we draw
 “ near the throne of Grace!

“ Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Found my soul, these
 “ three days, comforted in the delightful contemplation of
 “ God’s free grace and love: but was too soon checked and
 “ interrupted: and one means, I believe, might be, my
 “ christian Friends not meeting together at the usual time,
 “ and my being inadvertently hindered from hearing the
 “ word of God.

“ Monday. This day visited a Friend; one who had
 “ once the appearance of seriousness; but is now eaten up
 “ with worldly cares, and what there was, I fear, is vanish-
 “ ed. Returned reflecting on the goodness of God that it
 “ is not so with me. By nature I am the same. If there is
 “ any difference thy grace hath made it. Lord, keep me in
 “ thy right way, and take all the glory to thyself.

“ Wednesday.

God may, amidst the waste of time and death, leave, here and there, an old Disciple, in the

2. That his own glory may be advanced.

The Prophet, speaking of the gentiles, in reference to gospel times, says, "thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God."† The sun, the moon, the stars, the works of God, all praise him in every part of his vast dominion. They all tend to raise our conceptions of God,

"Wednesday. Blessed be God for a few pious acquaintance with whom I have been conversing. They are greatly helpful with regard even to worldly things, about which we have been conversing this evening. Lord, make us faithful!

"Friday. I could not meet my Friends this evening: yet my heart was there more than were I was. I hope this is a token to me for good.

"Monday and Tuesday. Visited some Friends this evening with whom, I trust, I was edified. But I may say much on the contrary where I was constrained to go last night. Lord, lay not this sin to my charge. Thou, who knowest all things, knowest that my heart did not consent to such trifling foolish things as were the subject of conversation. Oh! help me to act, in all places, and at all times, as becomes a christian.

"Wednesday. Lord, how I am incumbered about many things. The one thing needful too much neglected. I was absent from my pious praying Friends this evening, with whom I wished to have been. My heart was with them—I hope I was not forgotten by them at the throne of grace—and I found a longing after communion with God and Christ, and their pious conversation.

"Tuesday. Met my christian Friends as usual, and was much comforted by being enabled to pray with and for one another. Lord, increase our faith and love, and may we be ripening apace for the heavenly world, where we shall enjoy thy presence to all eternity!"

† Isaiah lxii. 3.

and to fill the soul with a sense and apprehension of his greatness and glory. But an *old Disciple* stands first amongst his works in this part of his creation, and reflects his glory, and that of the divine Redeemer, the most. Although no man hath seen or can see God, he hath not left himself without witness. Every good man, whether he dwells in a palace or a cottage, is a system of himself—he holds forth to the view and admiration of the world, the natural and moral attributes of God—and reflects those perfections of the divine nature, in particular, in which fallen men have the most immediate concern, and which could not be displayed in the formation or preservation of this material system. An old Disciple is a monument raised to the boundless grace and compassion of God through Christ. The pious (to use St. Paul's expression) “are to the “praise of the glory of his grace” *—and speaking of the fruits of righteousness which they bear, he says, “they are by Jesus Christ, to the “praise and glory of God.” † They receive, and reflect, “the light of the knowledge of the glory “of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ.” ‡ He who is brought into the honourable and happy state of discipleship to Christ, entertains high and exalted ideas of his God—his purest and best affections are, thro' grace, fixed upon him—and it is his warm wish and fervent prayer that Christ may be received, and God glorified by all, and have a throne in every heart. The Prophet, speaking of the people of God, says, “they shall be as the “stones of a crown.” § As the crown, and the stones which enrich and adorn it, direct the eyes

* Eph. i. 6.
 || Zech. ix. 16.

† Phil. i. 2.

‡ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

of surrounding spectators to the Prince; so do the pious among men, whilst their own thoughts and affections are fixed upon God and Christ, direct the thoughts and affections of others too. An old Disciple will speak for his God; and it will be his pleasure to tell of his wonderful works, and to celebrate his praise. He will endeavour to vindicate the ways of God to men, and to wipe off every aspersion that is cast upon Jesus or his cross. He conceives of every indignity offered to God, to Jesus, and religion, as an indignity offered to himself; and he seems to share the honour that is done to either. An old Disciple, in faithfulness to his covenant engagements, will have the glory of God, and the honour of Christ, in view—for this he will breathe and live—this he will conceive of as, by far, the most important end of his being—and his fervent prayer to his God will be, that he may never lose sight of it, living, dying, or in any scene through which he may be called to pass. Upon the heart of an old Disciple this injunction is written, “let your light so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven”*—and that of the Apostle, built on the circumstance of believers being bought with a price, “therefore glorify God, in your body, and spirit, which are God’s.”† We may say with respect to every old disciple, and the whole believing world, “the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.”

God may leave, here and there, an old Disciple in this dangerous, hostile world, that they may reflect an honour on himself as keeping them

* Mat. v. 16.

† 1 Cor. vi. 20.

“ by

" by his almighty power, through faith, unto sal-
 " vation ;" and be an encouragement to others
 to seek the favour of such a powerful and grac-
 ious friend, and to trust his guidance, arm, and
 protection. They may be designed, in part, as
 standing proofs that those who are born of God
 " shall never perish, and that none shall pluck
 " them out of the Father's hand." A long life
 opens a large field for temptations, trials, and
 numberless afflictions ; and our heavenly Father
 may have willed the stay of some old Disciples,
 that his own goodness, power, and faithfulness
 may be displayed in their perseverance, support,
 and comfort—in their repeated victories over sin
 and Satan—in the prevailing calmness and se-
 renity of their spirits—and in the amazing degree
 in which they bear up against a world so full of
 trouble as this. An old Disciple, besides con-
 necting the past age with the present, and hand-
 ing down the dealings of God, old truth and old
 religion together ; is a standing proof that there
 is an arm that upholds and guards the pious—
 that they are not left to droop, to sink, to perish
 —that " as their day is, so shall their strength
 " be." " When, therefore, O Christian ! thou
 " lookest forward into future life—hast in view
 " some approaching trial, some loss thou art
 " likely to sustain, or some affliction thou canst
 " not escape—do not despair—let not thy cou-
 " rage fail. The God thou serveest is an un-
 " changeable God ; and his conduct to each aged
 " venerable saint, is a sample of his conduct to
 " thee. Cherish not that worst enemy to a chris-
 " tian's comfort, unbelief. Through what scenes
 " canst *thou* expect to pass, through which this
 " and the other old Disciple have not been car-
 " ried with safety and comfort ? Whatever thy
 " wants,

“wants, cares, fears, difficulties, discouragements are, cast them all on God—be found in the way of duty—and thy language will be, in hoary age, “I have been young but now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken,”* nor hath God forsaken me. This language, no less honourable to the truth and faithfulness of God, than replete with encouragement to the believing world, is the language of every old Disciple.

God may, amidst the waste of time and death, leave, here and there, an old Disciple, in the

3. And last place, that their own graces may be improved, and their future felicity enhanced.

The wise and gracious Head of the church is perfectly acquainted with the state of all its members, and is pursuing a plan which Heaven and Earth will see reason to admire. The death of a Disciple is not a casual event. The time, and place, of his departure, his heavenly Father wisely and graciously appoints. He who determines the revolution of day and night, determines also when a Disciple's day of life shall close, and his night of death commence. If “not a sparrow falls to the ground without our heavenly Father,” shall the excellent of the earth—the children of the covenant—the favourites of heaven, fall without him? It cannot be. That Disciple, whose stay upon earth He prolongs, may have some remaining dross to be purged away—some favourite sin to be mortified—or

* Psalm xxxvii. 25.

some grace (that, perhaps, of faith, of weanedness from this world, of patience, or of trust in God) to be improved. He whose presence makes heaven, best knows what is requisite in order to engage in its employments, and relish its bliss: and some old Disciple may be left, that what is yet wanting may be supplied, and that he may enter heaven with greater advantage. There may be yet some trying scenes to be passed through, which may be the means of "working out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."* It may, then, be for the Disciple's *own* good no less than for the good of others, and the glory of his God, that his stay upon earth is prolonged.

For these reasons, honourable to God, and happy for the world, we find, here and there, an old Disciple.

And such was he whose death we this day lament. Though not so old, perhaps, as a *man*, as Mnason was, I have not a doubt that he was older as a *Disciple*. The late Mr. JOHN MUDGE hath been, for almost 40 years, an ornamental member of this church. He was chosen a Deacon when the church was under the pastoral care of my worthy predecessor the Rev. William Gordon; in which office he hath acted with exemplary zeal and faithfulness, and done much to endear him to many. Oh! may the great Head of the church fill up the vacancies which death is making, with others of equal wisdom, piety, and zeal!

Our departed Friend, by whose death the once happy Partner of his life—his dear Children—his Acquaintance—this Church—and I myself, have

sustained so great a loss, was possessed of no very common share of genius, which he improved by much reading, and by the conversation of the wise and good, which he studiously sought. Some small things he published; and amongst his papers there are pieces on very important subjects, which he seems, in some part or other of his life, to have designed for the press.

But there is nothing he discovered more than the genius and spirit of the gospel. I am afraid that, in these times, there are but few lives so full of thoughtfulness, devotion, and piety as his was.

His Parents belonged to the established church, and there he attended in the early part of life. On his admission into this church, he put into the hands of the late Rev. Dr. Jennings his reasons for his separation.*

When

* L. Day, Aug. — He writes thus. "I was this evening proposed to Mr. Jennings's church. Lord, do thou make me a living member of the church of Christ, that I may grow up into a divine likeness to him, who is my head, even Jesus my Redeemer. I think, the Providence of God hath made my way plain (with respect to my separation from the Establishment) before my face. I have long waited there, hoping that God would revive his work — that Christ and his personal glories, as Prophet, Priest and King, might again be exhibited to the faith of Christians. I am very confident, that unless Christ be thus set forth, Sinners will not be awakened and converted, nor Christians have the proper food for their souls. Ignorance and bigotry abound, and these are usually the spring whence corruption in doctrine, and immoralities in life do flow. In matters of religion, I hope I shall call no man Master upon earth, nor be led by any to think contrary to the sacred oracles. The Church hath but one Head, and that is Christ — and the sacred oracles are the *only* standard of truth to which all things of a religious nature are to be brought; all doctrines tried; all our actions modelled and directed; and by which I hope to be judged at
" the

When the first deep and serious impressions were made upon him, does not appear; but in those papers which he entitles, *An Account of the Dealings of God, in the way of his Providence and Grace, towards the unworthiest of his Servants*, which was begun on his Birth-day, when he was 30 years of age, there is that knowledge of divine truth—that deep sense of divine things—and that experience in the ways of God and religion discovered, as makes it exceedingly probable that he was brought early to God, and therefore, eminently, an old Disciple.

The annual return of his Birth-day* was attended with close self-examination, gratitude to
 E God,

“ the last great and awful day. Thou, O Lord, knowest that
 “ herein I seek not my own will but thine. By this ministry,
 “ thou hast been pleased to affect my soul at first with many
 “ serious impressions from time to time, and hast since confirmed and strengthened me in thy ways. By this, as an instrument, I first drew my spiritual breath, and by this also
 “ hath the divine life been maintained. Blessed be thy
 “ name that the sound of salvation reached me any where;
 “ that the gospel was proclaimed in my ears; and that I,
 “ who by nature was afar off, am brought nigh by the blood
 “ of Christ. It is to thy free mercy I owe all I have, or am,
 “ and to thy name, so long as life remains, I’ll give the
 “ glory.”

* “ July 27, 1739. This day is the annual return of the
 “ day of my birth, to be remembered by me with a mixture
 “ of joy and sorrow. Thirty years of time are now rolled
 “ away, and but a very few of them have been devoted in
 “ obedience and thankfulness to God and Christ, to whose
 “ Providence and Grace I have been early indebted for the
 “ supplies of the natural and the spiritual life. Lord, pardon the sins of my youth, and the ingratitude of my riper
 “ years: wash me in the blood of Jesus: create me anew:
 “ and let my future life be devoted to thy fear, to the concerns of an awful eternity, and the interest of mine immortal soul. Goodness and mercy have followed me all
 “ my days, and I can trace some footsteps of divine conduct
 “ from

God, and renewed acts of self-dedication. The close of one year, and the beginning of another, were

“ from early life which, I trust, have made some lasting impressions upon my mind, and given me some living hopes of God’s future favour. A gloomy cloud lately hung over me: but God hath rolled it away. A divine hand remarkably appeared. I now see that my heavenly Father designed this, seemingly, cross providence, for my more comfortable situation in life, which I have since experienced.

“ Oh! how unspeakable are thy mercies! How great thy goodness to me, O my God! In numberless seen, and unseen dangers, hast thou been my Saviour and Deliverer. Thou hast been a wall of fire round about me, and hast given the strongest assurances that thou wilt be my everlasting glory. But, oh! how contracted is my affection to thee. Lord, draw out my heart in holy breathings after thee. Be thou the supreme delight of my heart. Give me a tongue tuned for divine praise; and gently touch the springs of mine affections, to love thee as thou hast loved me. How wide and extensive thy mercy! How innumerable thy thoughts of love! My daily wants have been supplied by thee, and thy grace and mercy have daily reproved my distrust. My ungrateful memory hath been slow to retain, and my soul still less thankful for the favours and mercies of my God. No day, no hour, no minute, but hath been filled with the divine benignity; and hath been a witness also of mine ingratitude. Alas! what insensibility governs my heart! How great my guilt! Oh! cancel it by the blood of a crucified Redeemer; and let me from the very moment I make this confession of my guilt, set up a memorial to thy goodness, faithfulness, and truth.

“ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Let me exist no longer than I adore and love thee.

“ July 27, 1740. This is the return of the day of my birth, and I may truly say, with much more propriety than it was first said, “ few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.” Oh! how many mercies have I received, spiritual and temporal; and yet, alas! how unprofitable have I been. Lord, pardon my unfruitfulness, and enter not into judgment with me. Help me to live more to thine honour and glory this year, if thou art
“ pleased

were seasons employed by him the same way. †
The return of other days was not suffered to pass
without suitable reflections on those events by

E 2

which

“ pleased to spare me. I know thou art plenteous in goodness.

“ Great is thy love and large thy grace

“ Through the redemption of thy son :

“ O turn my feet from sinful ways,

“ And pardon what my hands have done.

† “ Wednesday, Dec. 31, The last day of another year.
“ If it were to be my last day, what an account could I give to
“ my Heavenly Father of an improvement answerable to the
“ time and talents given me? Enter not into judgment with
“ thy servant, O Lord! My works have not been filled up
“ —many empty spaces are there in my time and duties—
“ too much spiritual sloth and indolence—too much lassitude and weariness in the performance of secret duties, as
“ well as those which were more public. Much, very much,
“ is amiss in my soul. Lord, rectify every disorder. I may
“ truly say with an holy Man, who had not so much reason
“ as I have, “ little is gained for my soul, though much
“ mercy hath been received : many talents not traded with
“ aright.” It is the blood of Christ must set all straight
“ between me and my God. Lord, here I apply for pardon
“ and grace. The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin :
“ and here do I rest my guilty soul.

“ Thursday, Jan. 1. Oh! how unspeakable is the goodness of God in sparing me to see the light of another day,
“ and the beginning of another year. Oh! that that life
“ he hath been pleased to spare may be devoted to his fear.
“ Since thou, O Lord, hast not cut me down as a cumberer
“ of thy ground, spare me this year also, and dig about me
“ and dung me, that I may bring forth much fruit. If I
“ am one of thy children, planted in thy house, I shall grow
“ and thrive.

“ This new year’s day is, I trust, the best I ever saw. My
“ heart is filled with love to God and thankfulness to my
“ dear Redeemer. Most heartily do I renew the solemn dedication of myself to him which I have often made in the secret retirement of my soul; and if I have ever done it as I
“ ought, Lord, I desire now to do it. Help me by thy grace
“ to make a surrender of my soul, my all, to thee, in the
“ bond

which they were distinguished. † God's providential dealings with the nation at large §—with those

“bond of an everlasting covenant through the merits of a crucified Saviour. Give me a new heart, new life, new love, new joy, new vigour, new resolutions and desires, wholly aiming at thy glory, mine own and others good; then it will be a happy new year indeed.”

† “Lord's Day, March 15. This is called by the Church *Passion Sunday*: but, alas! how little of the Redeemer's sorrows is felt by many who pretend to honour this time. Lord, may I experience every week to be a kind of *Passion Week* in mourning over my sins that nailed thee to the cross. Oh! that my soul may be really affected with the benefits of thy death and passion.

“Friday, May 1. The pleasant time of the year, when all things look fair and flourishing. Oh! that it were so with my soul. Lord, make it like a watered garden, that fruits of grace may appear to myself and others: then I shall be as one planted in the house of the Lord, and bring forth fruit in old age, to shew that the Lord is good and just.” Went to Stepney to hear the Rev. Mr. H——d. He preached upon these words, “Thy own Friend, and thy Father's Friend, forsake thou not.” “Lord, I hope thou art my Parents' God. They gave me up to thee. Oh! that neither of us may forsake thee!”

§ “The 26th of December, 1739. Began the Frost; a time much to be remembered. The God of nature displayed his Almighty Power, that men might fear before him. He speaks, and all nature obeys. He bids the glorious Luminary of Heaven cut short its appointed race; and, lo! the cherishing influences thereof are gone: nature smiles no more: the gloomy night of winter appears, and dreadful cold begins to seize us; shakes our tottering constitutions; and freezes up our vital spirits. The waters begin to glide but slowly down their usual channels, and stiffen as they pass, till at length they congeal, and make one ponderous mass. To what power shall this wonderful change of nature be ascribed, but to the Omnipotent Jehovah, “who holds the winds in his fists, and casteth forth his ice like morsels, and scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.”

“My

those who were within the circle of his acquaintance *—and more especially with himself || were eyed

“ My state by nature bears too near a resemblance to this awful season; and may I not say that still I find too great an analogy? How cold is my heart! How lifeless my soul, as if all her active powers were frozen up, and rendered incapable of loving and adoring the author of my being, and the fountain of my happiness! Arise, thou *Sun of Righteousness*, and shine upon my soul—warm my heart with thy celestial fire—shed abroad thy love in my soul—and melt mine icy heart, that it may be susceptible of divine impressions. Let not the vital flame be quite extinct. Pour in the oil of grace and holiness, of joy and gladness: and add still more and more sacred fuel to this divine fire, that it may engage mine heart more to thee, and draw out my warmest affections after thee; that it may enkindle such a flame of heavenly love in my breast as shall be increasing to all eternity!

“ Great distress was very visible among the Poor through the inclemency of the season. In what an abject state did they appear in almost every street!—Here we may observe how God our heavenly Father would instruct us to look to him for the supply of every want: as also to see and experience the true value of the common blessings of his Providence by the *want* of them. Oh! that this may be the happy effect of the present visitation. Many a mild and favourable winter hath run its usual round until it became common, and then was disregarded; like the glorious Sun that sheds its light and life upon us, whilst we are but little affected with the blessing. During this season, God was pleased to open the hearts of the Rich to a generous supply of the Poor's necessity. May God be glorified, and the Poor enabled to be truly thankful!—How gracious hath my heavenly Father been to me! I have a competency of the bounties of his Providence: food to eat: raiment to cover me from the extremity of the season: and fire to warm and cherish me. Blessed be thy name, that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days. Oh! that I may live thy praise—be always ready to speak well of thy name—and be concerned to promote thy glory; and when I depart hence, with my latest breath to leave an honourable testimony to the faithfulness and goodness of my God!

* “ Tuesday, February 10. This day a particular acquaintance of mine was married. I trust the parties were
“ first

eyed by him with the greatest attention, and with an heart-felt concern that he might understand

“ first married to Christ. Oh! that they may have the blessing of God with them to make the married state comfortable and happy!

“ L. Day, July 26. I was much discomposed this evening, at the vestry, by the indisposition of a Friend who was taken with a violent fit, which continued near an hour and half. Lord, teach him, and me, to see how frail our condition is. Help us “ so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”—This disorder of body is a fit emblem of a troubled conscience, stung with the wrath of God, under a feeling sense of sin and guilt, full of various agitations and motions till God is pleased to shew mercy, and to apply the blood of Christ, which alone can assuage its grief and give it comfort.

“ Mondäy, Aug. 3. God is blessing me day by day with continued health and strength, whilst many lie on beds of languishing, and others are going down to the chambers of the grave. O Lord, why am I spared, except it be because thou wilt be good to the most unthankful and unholly? Oh! let thy goodness lead me daily to repentance! Visited one of my dear Friends who is ill of a fever. Lord, speak the word and thy servant shall be healed.” Let this visitation be a means to wean his soul from the world and sin, and bring him nearer to Christ, to heaven, and glory. Amen.

“ Thursday. Visited my dear Friend again, whose illness increases, and I apprehend he will not recover. Lord, spare him if it be thy will. Reconcile us to this awful dispensation, and may this be a means of fixing our souls more upon the joys of the heavenly state and world!

“ Tuesday, Aug. 11. Went to see my Friend Ed—ds, but was not admitted, he being worse. Lord, I fear I shall not converse with him any more on this side eternity. Oh! that he may have a stedfast faith in that Redeemer who hath begun the good work in his soul. This will carry him through the gloomy vale with comfort, and bring him safely into the joy of his Lord.

“ Thursday. Visited my dear Friend again, whom I found upon the confines of the grave. He seemed stretching for immortality, and I found him, whilst he had the use of reason, looking up to his Father God for that assistance such an awful moment required. My soul was
“ much

stand their voice, fall in with the designs of God in them, and be instructed and profited by them.

“ much affected at the awful, yet charming, sight of a dying christian. I could scarce bear it, though joy was mingled with sorrow. I thought I could have been content to have gone with him, if it had been the will of my heavenly Father: however, I hope, when that time comes, his Spirit will congratulate mine on its arrival on the heavenly shore, where we shall unitedly adore before the throne of God. About an hour or two after I left him, his soul took its flight.

“ Farewell, dear Soul, a short farewell,
 “ We shall rejoice to meet above
 “ In that bright world where pleasures dwell,
 “ And all our work be praise and love.

“ Thus, for a while, I have lost a good Friend, a kind, and christian companion: but my loss is his gain; for “ to him to live was Christ.” What is this life compared to that he now enjoys? Fulness of joy: never ending pleasures. His soul exults in the arms of Jesus, whose love he delighted to think and speak of here. His faith now is changed for sight—his hope, for enjoyment—and his affections center in him who is an unchangeable and soul-satisfying good.—By this awful providence, God hath separated one of the few (with whom I most frequently converse) from us. Who amongst us is to be the next he only knows. Lord, let this teach us the great lesson of watchfulness, that we may be ready whenever thou shalt send the summons. Help us so to live, that it may be no matter of uncertainty to us into which world we are to enter, and with whom we are to dwell for an eternity.

“ Monday, August 17. On this evening my dear Friend was buried. Little did I once think mine eyes would have beheld him so soon an object of mortality, and the food of worms. But herein my heavenly Father gives me a lesson of instruction, that the strength of youth is no match for death, the King of Terrors. Death, and the grave, are part of the curse justly pronounced on man for his sin against God. But, blessed be God, the sting is taken out by Christ, and the grave is become a perfumed bed to all who live and die in him. The grave shall not hold the dust of his people any longer than he pleaseth. At the morning

them. The sabbaths & of our departed Friend
were days distinguished for recollection——self
converse

“ morning of the Resurrection, shall the scattered particles
“ be gathered together, and body and soul shall be for ever
“ happy in the enjoyment of him who is their chief delight.
“ Thus does my heart rejoice in the pleasing thought of
“ meeting my dear Friend, not only in the happy separate
“ state of souls, but in perfection at the resurrection of the
“ just. In the mean time I now take mine awful leave,
“ and say,

“ I leave thee to thy rest:
“ Dear Soul, enjoy thy God,
“ Till we from bands of clay releas'd
“ Spring out, and climb the starry road.

|| “ August, 1739. Now being settled in the station di-
“ vine goodness placed me, I have many pleasurable oppor-
“ tunities of reflecting on the advantage of not having all
“ my time expended in the necessary avocations of life, and
“ in labouring for the meat which perisheth, God having
“ liberally indulged me with many hours of happy freedom.
“ How am I herein favoured! Many better, much better
“ than myself, labour hard the whole natural day and more
“ to support their dying bodies. But if *they* should get
“ nearer heaven, in a suitable preparedness, in *one* hour in
“ a day than I do in *six* or *seven*, how will this upbraid
“ mine inactivity and sloth! Should they be more zealous,
“ more holy, more devout, and attain to greater knowledge
“ in divine things—be more humble, more meek, more pa-
“ tient and more resigned to their heavenly Father than I,
“ with all the advantages I enjoy, it would be a great ag-
“ gravation of my guilt. These hours were not given to
“ me to surfeit upon the enjoyments, to strut and wanton,
“ in the pride and vanity of life. No, but much on the
“ contrary: to make God and Christ the supreme objects of
“ my love, my meditation and delight—to lay out myself
“ to advance the glory of Christ's kingdom—to do the
“ utmost good I am capable of in my station—to converse
“ much with heaven—to ennure myself to the study of
“ the employments, and pleasures of that state, that when I
“ come to launch out of time into eternity, it may be no
“ matter of uncertainty with me which state will be my por-
“ tion, and that I may have an entrance administered abun-
“ dantly

attendance—and of that concern to *bring* a serious, tender and devout frame of soul; of which he was a very instructive and striking example. He lived

— “ God hath indulged me with another sabbath on earth; Oh! that it may train me up to keep an eternal sabbath in heaven! I hope I gained greater knowledge of God and Christ, and greater power over my corruptions, this day, than ever. Lord, grant it may be so! May thy spirit awaken me to a narrow inspection into my own heart on the solemn day of humiliation that is approaching, that I may see my own guilt, and be truly humbled under a sense of it.

— “ What a blessing it is to have the frequent returns of sabbaths, to set the world at a distance, while we go up to converse with God! Lord, have I conversed in reality—or have I only fancied that I have been with thee? Oh! that it may appear in mine after conduct with more plainness to myself and others!

— “ Have had this sabbath many scruples in my mind—have been restrained from the overpowering conceit of my own judgment—and begged of God to give direction. Attended the duties of the day, but with much heaviness. Lord, who is sufficient for these things? Let thy grace be sufficient, &c.” Humble me under a sense of my many infirmities and short-comings in duty, and lead me to that blood that cleanseth me from all sin. Amen.

— “ This is the day which the Lord hath made: I will rejoice and be glad therein. God hath given me comfortable hope, thro’ grace, this day, that I was buried with Christ in his death, and am risen with him to newness of life. Oh! may I “set my affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.” May I be dead (in a manner) to the world, but really dead to sin, and may my life be hid with Christ, &c.

— “ Mine eyes have seen the return of another sabbath. Oh! that my heart was truly affected with it! It is a privilege and blessing to draw near to God as a reconciled God and Father. I trust I know what this means. Oh! that I may not deceive myself in the judgment I form concerning my state. I was much affected by the word preached on both parts of the day. My soul hungered, and God was pleased to refresh me.

— “ I have, I trust, found, this day, joy and peace in believing; but not so much as I could wish. My heart
“ was

lived not only under the conviction of the sacred nature and unspeakable value of sabbaths, but of the

F 2

“ was not lively, nor carried out after Jesus with that fervour of desire which it ought. Oh! that I could say by happy experience, “ He is to me the chief among ten thousand, &c.” Lord, I desire it may be so.

— “ This sabbath hath been, in part, but a barren sabbath to my soul. One reason, I apprehend, was I heard a sermon in the morning that had neither Christ, nor life, nor spirit in it. I fear many souls were like mine, worse than when they went in. Lord, I acknowledge my fault. A spirit of curiosity led me there to hear a person dignified in the church. Therefore I gained nothing. Oh! revive thy work in the Established Church. The harvest there is great, but faithful labourers are but few.— Was instructed and comforted this afternoon by a truly scriptural sermon on these words, “ in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” Lord, help me to retain the substance thereof, and apply it to my soul!

— “ Rose this day refreshed with the comforts of the last night’s supplications at the throne of grace. Attended to the secret and public duties of the day, and found God was with me. Bless the Lord, O my Soul.

— “ Much comforted this day by the word and spirit of God. The exposition and sermon were both applicable to my case: the one setting forth the day of grace; the other the glories of the Redeemer, his office as the great Physician of souls, and his readiness to heal and save us.

— “ This hath been a day sacred to divine love indeed. My heart hath been much with God in secret and public duties. Oh! how precious is Christ to my soul! How hath his Minister displayed his love in discoursing on that text, “ I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” I find myself a sinner, and the chief of them. O, my Saviour! let thy goodness lead me, and thy Spirit incline me to repentance.

— “ Found my heart little affected with the sermon this morning. Indeed it was not so spiritual a discourse as I could have wished—but I fear the greatest defect was in my corrupt heart, the seed-plot of all that is bad. But, blessed be God, his word made its entrance with abundant sweetness the after part of this day. I found it became an informing, quickening, and comforting word. Salvation was the theme, and, I trust, through divine Grace, will be the blessed effect.”

the vast importance of a *constant* and *habitual* sense of divine things upon his soul *. How his common time was spent—what relish for divine things.

* "Friday. My heart hath not been with God and Christ these two or three days so much as I could wish. Heard a sermon at St. M——y B——y Church, but was little benefited, because Christ was not displayed in any respect that I remember. Lord, do thou teach, and I shall know thee—draw me, and I shall run after thee—quicken me that I may call upon thy name, and find him whom my soul loveth.

"Saturday. I trust I have been enabled to walk as in the presence of God the week past: but am conscious of many sins and defects: Lord, humble me under a sense of them.

"Tuesday. Observed that God is visiting many around me with fevers and illness of one kind and another, but is pleased to preserve our family in health. Not unto me, not unto me, O Lord, but to thy great name be the praise and glory. That life which thou sparest shall, by thy grace, be devoted to thy fear, and spent in thy service.

"Good-Friday. The awful time of my Lord's crucifixion. Have I laid my sins at the foot of thy cross? If I have never yet done it, Lord, help me now to do it! Give me faith to believe in thee, and view *thee* as dying for my sins, that I might not suffer for them. Lord, I believe; help mine unbelief. Let me find redemption in thy blood, and at last be admitted into heaven, the purchase of it.

"Tuesday, March 31, 1740. Went this afternoon to hear my dear Friend, Mr. W——d, in company with two of my intimate friends. Was much comforted at the prospect of so much good being done through him. "The harvest truly is great; but the faithful labourers are but few. Lord, send forth labourers into thy harvest." Conversed with him at night, and joined in prayer and praise. Returned home with more comfort than when I went. Oh! may we all grow up into him who is our Head, even Jesus our Redeemer. Amen.

"Saturday. Ever since Thursday, I have been in a sort of spiritual slumber, inactive in the business of the christian life. Lord, pardon my backwardness and non-improvement: cure this disease of my soul: raise my dull powers: quicken me by thy spirit: draw out mine affections after
"thee

things remained upon his soul from sabbath to sabbath—were the matter of his frequent and close

“ thee: let me run the ways of thy commandments and not
“ be weary, walk in the paths of holiness and never faint.

“ Fain would I stretch my wings, and try
“ How faith can soar above
“ To fetch me strength, to raise me high
“ The object of my love.

“ Now the thought that Christ ever lives to make intercession for me is of unspeakable comfort to my soul.

“ Wednesday. Found my heart wander from God too much this day; but in the close of it, God was pleased to draw me nearer himself by affecting my soul under the word preached at an evening lecture. I trust this was a token for good to me. My heart went along with the word. By whom should I abide but thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and eternal life itself, and thou wilt give it me. Oh! that I may experience more of the favour of the knowledge of Christ as it hath been displayed this evening!

“ Friday. The Lord comforted me again this evening by his word from a good *old Disciple*, who spoke many serious truths from John viii. 36. “ If the son, &c.” Lord, save me by thy free grace, and as an evidence of it, make me free from guilt, free from sin, and cause me to love thee freely.

“ Friday. I have been put, this evening, at the house of a Friend, upon examining my state, whether I experimentally know that Christ hath made me free—free from the wrath of God—free from the guilt of sin—and from its power and dominion. The consequence of this trial was, that I was able to see into my corrupt heart, and to discover that sin hath too much dominion over me. Lord, lead me to the blood of sprinkling: purge away my dross: cleanse me by thy spirit from all filthiness: let me no longer retain any beloved lust to rival thee in my soul: but do thou come by thy Spirit and erect thy throne there!

“ Wednesday. This day a Minister was ordained at Mr. ***’s Church in ———: I was there. I had many painful fears, that what makes a gospel minister was wanting. Lord, lead Minister and People more to Christ, then they
“ will

close examination. He seems, through life, to have acted under the recollection of those most solemn

“ will remember this day with comfort on every returning year, and grow up daily in conformity to him.

“ Tuesday. This evening some good Christians, with Mr. B——y, met to spend two hours in prayer on occasion of the Lecture established there. I hope God was with us of a truth. They were enabled particularly to pray for some refreshing showers of rain upon the thirsty earth. These God was pleased almost immediately to send. Lord, give us thankful hearts, and water our thirsty souls with heavenly dews, that we bring forth the fruits of righteousness to the honour of thy grace and love!

“ Saturday evening. God gave me such a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin as, I think, I never had before. My soul was truly humbled, and enabled to plead with God for mercy, and grace to help in every time of need, both for myself, and a Friend with whom I had lately been conversing on some very important things. Oh! may a diviner flame of love to God and Christ be enkindled in our hearts; then shall we hate sin with a more perfect hatred, and love holiness with a more perfect love. My soul does now experience peace with God. Oh! that this state might always last! It was truly said by one, that “ the tears of a penitent are more pleasant than the seeming pleasures of sin.” I can assuredly say that this is true. Oh! that I may be enabled “ rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”

“ Saturday, Spent as much time as could be spared from business in reflecting on my spiritual state, and preparing for the ensuing sabbath.

“ Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. These three days found great reason to complain of the want of the presence of Christ, to make every creature comfort comfortable. Differed much with a dear Friend on some occasions; yet was enabled to love, and pray for him more than ever.

“ Thursday, Friday, Saturday. Surely my heart hath wandered far from God, and felt a sensible withdrawing of his presence. This is because I do not live by faith on his promise and covenant as I ought to do. Lord, increase my faith, and bring me nearer to thyself.

“ Monday,

solemn engagements into which he, and four of his intimate friends, entered with God on the fifth of January, 1741. On which day he thus writes.

“ This

“ Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Found much of the presence of God, which enabled me to walk humbly and comfortably in the way of my duty.

“ Thursday, Friday. God hath been pleased to shew me, this week, that my dependance is to be wholly on him; because it is he alone ordereth all affairs for his glory and his people's comfort. When my soul was troubled, his comforts refreshed me, and I was enabled to look to him as the God of Providence.

“ Monday—Thursday. My soul rejoices in God, and triumphs in the salvation he hath wrought for me.

“ Thursday to Monday. During these five days, I have experienced much of the presence of God. My heart is with him: my soul longeth for him: when shall I come and appear before him in the heavenly state and world. Providence seems to smile upon me. Oh! that I may be thankful. Lord, make me to shew forth thy praise, not with my lips only, but with my heart and my life also. Amen.

“ Friday, Saturday. “ Lord, make my way plain before my face. My worldly affairs give me much uneasiness. Oh! that I may see thy Providence pointing out my way; and let me take no step but what may some way or other promote thy glory, and my spiritual and eternal advantage.

“ Wednesday. After the business of the day, I went to the ordination of Mr. P——, at D——d. I hope it was a comfortable day to many there. The God of Nature smiled without; and the same God, as the God of grace, I hope, smiled within the sanctuary. His word was faithfully preached—the person solemnly set apart by prayer and imposition of hands—and, I hope, it will be a day to be remembered with growing pleasure, both to him, and those he is now set over. Amen and Amen.

“ Thursday. Had the happy opportunity of attending the service of God this day, it being a monthly day of prayer for the nation in general. I hope I can say the word was sweet to my taste. Lord, bring it to my remembrance; and hear our united supplications—give us the blessings we have been asking—forgive us the sins we
“ have

" This evening, after many preparatory meetings,
 " four of my most intimate Friends, with myself,
 " concluded our design for beginning and carry-
 " ing on a more intimate friendship in order
 " to

" have been confessing—and fill our souls with divine love,
 " that we may walk before thee as thy people.
 " Thursday and Friday. I am engaging myself still in
 " the affairs of time. Oh! that God would be pleased to
 " give me suitable direction, that I may plainly see that his
 " dispensations work together for my good. Lord, make
 " my way plain, and let the blessings of thy Providence
 " come to me in the streams of covenant grace and love.

" And then whatever state I'm in,
 " My heart will rest content ;
 " Nor will I murmur or repine
 " How sad for'er the event.

" Monday, Tuesday. My soul longeth after greater
 " measures of divine grace, that I may experience more of
 " the divine life ; that all below may become less in mine
 " esteem, and Heaven become the object of my warmest
 " wishes and desires.

" Haste, my Redeemer, from above
 " And warm my heart with heavenly love ;
 " Mine eager wishes mount on high,
 " And pour contempt beneath the sky.

" Wednesday and Thursday. This evening I hoped to
 " have employed in religious duties in company with my
 " pious friends: but was accidentally hindered. Oh! how
 " did my soul long to be with them. I could most willing-
 " ly have left my company to have enjoyed theirs, for it
 " hath been refreshing to me many times. However, I
 " hope, I met with divine consolations in secret prayer and
 " reading the word of God, in the comfort of which, I
 " trust, I walked all the ensuing day.

" Friday, Saturday. I now find I stand in great need of
 " divine assistance. I want wisdom to direct me in the af-
 " fairs and business of life, that I may act as becomes a
 " christian, and that an after reflection may not reproach
 " my present conduct. Lord, I commit my ways to thee.
 " Give

“ to further our spiritual and eternal good. Do
 “ thou, O Lord, cement our hearts in love, and
 “ help us by thine Holy Spirit to improve such
 “ opportunity. Make our friendship permanent,
 “ and may we delight to tell each other what
 “ good thou dost daily bestow upon us. —
 “ The instructions for this purpose were drawn
 “ up and signed by each of us with prayer to God
 “ for his blessing, and with a solemnity becom-
 “ ing such an engagement. The sacred covenant
 “ into which we entered is as follows.

Incomprehensible, Almighty, and gracious Lord God,
who searchest the hearts, and triest the reins of the
children of men! Thou knowest our sincerity, and our
thoughts are all unveiled to thee. We are surrounded
with thine immensity. Thou art a present, though in-
visible witness to the solemn affair in which we are
now engaging. We are taking hold of thy strength
that we may make peace with thee, and entering into
covenant with thee the Almighty God. These are,
with respect to us, the happy days long since predicted,
“ when one shall say, I am the Lord’s, and another
“ shall call himself by the name of Israel, and another
“ shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord; and I
“ will be their God, and they shall be my sons and
“ daughters, saith the Lord Jehovah.” With most
thankful sincerity we take hold on this covenant as it
is more fully manifested and explained in the gospel by
Jesus Christ; and humbly accepting thy proposals, we
bind ourselves to thee by a sacred and everlasting ob-

“ Give me that wisdom which is from above, that I may
 “ know how to act in a way conducive to thy glory and my
 “ own good. Let me be under the special direction of thy
 “ Spirit, to eye thee as the God of Providence, knowing it
 “ is thy promise, that “ all things shall work together for
 “ good to them that love God, and are the called, accord-
 “ ing to his purpose.

G

ligation;—

ligation—by a free and deliberate action. We do here ratify our baptismal engagements with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We religiously devote ourselves to thy service, and entirely submit to thy conduct. We renounce the glories and vanities of this world, and chuse thee as our happiness, our supreme felicity, and everlasting portion. We make no article with thee for any thing besides. Deny or give us what thou wilt, we would never repine while our happiness and principal treasure is secure. This is our deliberate—our free—and sincere determination, which, by thy grace, we will not retract till time shall be no more. O, thou! by whose power alone we shall be able to stand, put thy fear into our hearts that we may never depart from thee. Let not the world with all its smiles; nor death nor hell with all their terrors, force us to violate this sacred vow. Oh! let us never live to abandon thee, nor draw that impious breath that would deny thee.—And, now, let surrounding Angels witness for us, that we do solemnly devote all the powers and faculties of our souls to thy service; and when we presumptuously employ any of the advantages thou hast given us, to thy dishonour, let them testify against us, and let our own words condemn us. Amen, even so let it be.

JOHN MUDGE.

“ Lord, I take this to be my own personal act
 “ and deed. Oh! let it be ratified in the court
 “ above, and my heart be for ever thine. May
 “ each of my dear Friends do the same; and
 “ may this union never be dissolved, but be im-
 “ proving till it is compleat in glory. Amen,
 “ Hallelujah!”

Some few months before his dissolution, there were more than usual marks of a decay of nature, of which he seemed somewhat sensible, and
 failed

failed not to behave, and express himself, as became one who had nothing to fear from death's approach.— The nature of his disorder, which greatly affected his understanding and his speech during the short time of his confinement, deprived his family and his friends of many instructive, animating, and comforting things he would, doubtless, have said. His dismissal was easy and gentle : his God kindly exempting him from that bodily pain with which death is commonly attended.

What hath been said on *an old Disciple*, and on our *departed Friend*, to whom that honourable title belonged, tends more to comfort the heart of the mourning *Widow* under the great loss she hath sustained, than any thing else I could possibly have advanced. For such as he was, heaven was made. However happy he might be in conjugal life, or even in that nearness to his God with which he was indulged upon earth ; the happiness he now possesses is greater still. With her tears of sorrow, tears of joy may mingle from the prospect of meeting him again at the right hand of the Judge, and spending a blissful eternity with him.

To you, the dear *children* of the deceased, your late wife, pious, and affectionate Father, is speaking in language full of instruction and encouragement. Many a faithful and affectionate admonition hath he given—many a fervent, heartfelt prayer hath he poured out before his God with you and for you—and an excellent example hath he set before you. These will, I trust, be daily recollected. He is calling to you from the grave

—from heaven—in that way that tends to move the heart, to engage you to live as the Disciples of Christ—to adorn your profession—to keep close to God as he did—to make high attainments in the divine life—and to act, at all times, as in the prospect of death and glory.

What hath been said is full of weighty instruction to all the *Young* before me. If you wish to see the close of life with comfort—to be ripe for heaven when you are ripe for the grave—begin your life with God, and enter into that solemn engagement of which I have just given you a very striking specimen. Piety in youth is the best ground on which to hope for solid peace and comfort in age. Oh! let me request it of you, who are young, as you wish either for the happiness or the honour of an old Disciple, that you copy the example of Abel, whose early offering God accepted—of Joseph, who said, “how can I “do this great wickedness and sin against God” * —of Jotham, “whose heart was tender” —of Obadiah, who in the worst of times could say, “I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth” † —of young Abijah, of whom it is said that “there was found in him some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam” ‡ —of Timothy, who “from a “child had known the holy scriptures” || —and of every serious, devout and pious youth of whom you have either heard or read. If you live without God and Christ in your youth, it is a sad sign that you will be without both in death, If honour and usefulness in life, and if peace and comfort when you die, are objects of importance,

* Gen. xxxix. 9. † 1 Kings xviii, 12, ‡ Chap. xiv. 13.
|| 2 Tim. iii. 15.

do not live without that which constitutes the Disciple of Jesus. There can be no harvest, except there be seed sown : and you will never see an happy old age, except your souls are brought to God. The scriptures speak of some whose " end is to be burnt"—whose " end is destruction." Oh ! what a shocking, dreadful end must that be ! How different—different as Hell from Heaven—from that of an old Disciple—from that of our departed Friend—and from what yours would be, would you, through grace, give up your hearts to God ! We would fain hope and believe that you will. Be good, and you will be esteemed by the wisest and the best—you will never want a friend—you will be lovely and precious in the esteem of God and Christ, and be blest by both for ever.

What hath been advanced respecting an old Disciple in general, or our departed Friend to whom that title of distinguished honour belonged, says far more to the *Aged* than I have time to mention.

If that hoary head is here that is not found in the " way of righteousness"—that aged person, who is no Disciple—that man, who even till the decline of life hath declined from the ways of God, cast off fear, restrained prayer, turned his back on Jesus—a man, who is stooping towards the grave as he goes, and yet hath nothing to hope for beyond it—what hath been said conveys weighty instruction to him. Oh ! may that God at whose command Moses brought water from a rock, bring the instruction home, melt his frozen, and soften his stony heart. An aged sinner—a
man

man that is ripe for the grave, yet hath not begun to live *—is one of the most painful and affecting objects that can be beheld upon earth. If any thing could be done for him, on my part, at this so late an hour, Oh! how gladly would I do it! But, what can I do? What can I say which he hath not heard a thousand times without effect? Many an attempt hath been made to engage his attention—to rouse and alarm him—to win, move, melt his heart. What more can be done? All things are possible with God; even his conversion. He knows this, but will not go to him. But I must not—I cannot—say “sleep on now and take thy rest.” I would attempt, in divine strength, to rouse the unfeeling and secure, though at the eleventh hour, and put him on applying to God, through Christ, for mercy. Though God hath been justly provoked to give such an one entirely up—and though the instances have been comparatively few of those who have been brought, in old age, to a saving acquaintance with Christ—yet the case is not absolutely beyond the reach of hope. O, thou! who art old, yet no Disciple, knock at the door of mercy—cry mightily to the Lord for faith and repentance—pour out thy soul in penitential sorrow at the Saviour’s feet—“arise, call upon God, if so be he may think upon thee, that thou perish not.” You increase your guilt by delay—you bar the door of mercy faster against you by every day you lose. You must so soon be in heaven or in hell, that there is not a moment

* An old man, who was converted within four years of his death, desired to have the following inscription upon his Tomb-stone.

“Here lies an aged man but four years old.”

to

to be lost. What success you will meet with, I cannot pretend to say, but this one thing I know, that if God give you grace to repent, he will, through Christ, accept your repentance: and that if you are enabled, late as it is, to go to God in Christ in the way that hath been held forth to your view, in the account I have given in this discourse of a real disciple, he will not cast you out either on account of your age, or the number or aggravation of your transgressions.

Of each aged Disciple present, whom God, amidst the waste of time and death, hath left, I need not request it that you fall in with all the wise and gracious designs of your heavenly Father in prolonging your stay. Your conduct and converse will, I trust, bring honour on yourselves—on your profession—and on him whom you serve. You will raise no evil report either of the good land, or the way to it. You will recommend the ways of Christ—convince gainsayers—encourage the awakened sinner—strengthen every believer's faith and love—and hold up the religion of the gospel to view as that which can support the heart, and which communicates dignity and glory to man. Let the world see, in you, what the mercy, power, and influence of Heaven can effect. Even until death, bring forth fruit unto God. We, as Ministers, want and wish the help of every old Disciple. Let your Children, your Servants, your Friends; let all who see you, see that the way to be happy is to fear the displeasure, obey the commands, believe the promises of God, and trust his grace through the blood and righteousness of Christ. Your stay upon earth can now be but short. Oh! improve it for every purpose honourable to your Saviour God—beneficial to the world—and happy to yourselves.

yourself. This is a work of which you will never repent: Mnason did not: our departed Friend did not. Let the prospect of that crown of glory that awaits the people of God be your comfort and support.

Oh! may all the honour and happiness that belongs to the most distinguished of Christ's Disciples, belong to you for ever. Amen.



E I N L S.

Published by the **AUTHORS**

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